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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 COLOMBO 001837

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SA, SA/INS, INL, DS, INR/NESA, G/TIP,
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10-23-13

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SUBJECT: Interior Ministry officials request more
police training and review human trafficking problem

Refs: (A) Colombo 1826

- (B) Colombo 1343, and previous

(U) Classified by Ambassador Jeffrey J. Lunstead.
Reasons 1.5 (b,d).

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SUMMARY
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[1](#)1. (C) The Ambassador met October 20 with Interior Minister Amaratunga and Interior Secretary Junaid. Amaratunga underscored his appreciation for U.S.-sponsored police training programs and requested further assistance. Junaid discussed the GSL's efforts to curb human trafficking. Turning briefly to the peace process, Amaratunga expressed appreciation to the U.S. for its continued application of public pressure on the Tamil Tigers. We think additional assistance to the police -- who are set to assume a more prominent role with Sri Lanka's move away from war to peace -- is an important priority. END SUMMARY.

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Meeting at Interior Ministry
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[1](#)2. (SBU) On October 20, Ambassador Lunstead made an introductory call at the Interior Ministry, meeting with Minister John Amaratunga and Secretary M.N. Junaid. A leading politician in Sri Lanka, Amaratunga is a senior United National Party (UNP) MP from the "Catholic belt" located north of Colombo and is the most senior Christian politician in the Buddhist-dominated government (he also serves as Minister of Christian Affairs). Junaid, a Muslim, is one of Sri Lanka's most senior and respected civil servants.

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Request for more Assistance for Police
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[1](#)3. (C) During the meeting, Amaratunga underscored his appreciation for the police training programs that the U.S. has sponsored in the past for GSL personnel. (Note: He was referring to the participation of a high-ranking Sri Lankan police officer at the recent International Association of Chiefs of Police conference in Philadelphia, and INL-sponsored training in basic drug enforcement and serious crimes investigation). He requested more assistance, especially in providing training in investigative techniques. With respect to equipment, he said Sri Lanka's police could utilize special investigative machinery, such as the Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS). The Ambassador replied that assisting the police was an important priority, and we would closely examine what sort of new programs we could sponsor.

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Update on Human Trafficking
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[1](#)4. (C) Junaid briefed the Ambassador on GSL efforts to curb human trafficking. Noting the arrest of over 750 Pakistanis, Indians, and others who were being trafficked through Sri Lanka earlier this year (see Ref B), Junaid said domestic and international media reporting of the GSL's crackdown on such illegal operations had sent a message to would-be smugglers that Sri Lanka would not tolerate such activities. He said he thought this might be the reason for the drop in trafficking cases in recent months. Stressing his government's commitment to addressing this matter fully and systematically, Junaid said plans were under way to develop a database to track foreign visitors. He admitted, however, that there was no such system currently in operation.

[1](#)5. (C) Junaid also reviewed the improved anti-forging features of new Sri Lankan passports -- personal

identification information is encoded in the document, which is visible only with special detection machines that will be able to verify the authenticity of Sri Lankan passports. The system is under trial and the GSL's intent is to eventually provide the detection machines to all diplomatic missions in Colombo.

16. (C) Amaratunga also took the opportunity to raise the issue of obtaining five-year U.S. visas for Sri Lankans. The Ambassador indicated that this involved reciprocity and the U.S. was ready to discuss the entire range of visa categories with the GSL. (Note: For most classes of visas, the U.S. only approves one-year visas for Sri Lankans.)

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Concerns regarding the LTTE
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17. (C) Turning briefly to the peace process, Amaratunga expressed his appreciation to the U.S. for its continued application of public pressure on the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). He said he believed that the pressure the group felt from the U.S. and the rest of international community was forcing the group to be more cautious. That said, Amaratunga expressed concern that the lack of recent involvement in the peace process by Anton Balasingham, the LTTE's London-based spokesman who has extensive international experience (see Reftels), was resulting in the group becoming somewhat more militant. This increased militancy, Amaratunga stated, was steadily having a debilitating effect on support for the peace process, with many in the south growing increasingly worried about the LTTE's intentions.

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COMMENT
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18. (C) Amaratunga and Junaid are articulate interlocutors and are considered to be effective administrators. Both men are long-standing contacts of Mission's and the meeting served to underline the closeness of that relationship. We will follow up on Amaratunga's request for more assistance for the police. We think additional assistance to the police -- who are set to assume a more prominent role with Sri Lanka's move away from war to peace -- is an important priority. Assistance to the GSL's effort to get a better handle on who is entering the country could also be valuable. END COMMENT.

19. (U) Minimize considered.

LUNSTEAD